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Ed. Scott

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INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

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INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: The Threat of War between India and Pakistan

Recent developments in the four-year-old Kashmir dispute have focused attention on the possibility of war between India and Pakistan in the near future. It now appears that war may break out within the next few months and that it may be intentionally provoked by India rather than by Pakistan.

The potentially explosive situation first developed shortly after the partition of India on 15 August 1947, with a revolt in Kashmir which led to a period of open warfare between India and Pakistan from October 1947 to January 1949 for possession of the State. Since that time, animosity has centered around the Kashmir question and especially around methods for demilitarizing the State preparatory to a plebiscite which would determine the future of its inhabitants.

Unlike Pakistan, India has been unwilling to accept suggestions of the United Nations Security Council for settlement of this dispute. It has based its intransigent attitude on the claim that Pakistan is the aggressor in Kashmir and therefore has no right to equal treatment with India.

During prolonged negotiations under Security Council auspices, both India and Pakistan have consolidated their positions in the parts of Kashmir held by them. India, particularly, has integrated the government and armed forces of Indian-held territory into its own systems and has shown a determination never to relinquish control.

In a recent bid to settle the Kashmir problem unilaterally, India on 1 May 1951 permitted the nominal ruler of the State to call for the convening of a Constituent Assembly early in October. It is generally assumed that one of the first duties of the Assembly will be to declare the allegiance of Kashmir to India. India will thus be able to present the United Nations with a fait accompli, on the argument that the people of Kashmir have expressed their will and that there is no further need for UN consideration of the case.

Pakistan, fearing this eventuality, has protested to the Security Council about the prospective Kashmiri Assembly action, and there has been some speculation as to the possibility that Pakistan would try to prevent it if the Security Council did not. To date, the Security Council has taken no action on the Pakistani protest.

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Unless there is a considerable, unforeseen rise in popular excitement over Kashmir, the well entrenched Pakistani Government can probably resist any pressure to take action before the Kashmir assembly elections. Since the government cannot win permanent possession of Kashmir by invasion, and since it might accomplish only its own destruction by doing so, it is unlikely to initiate armed warfare in the near future.

On the other hand, the Indian Congress Party high command, which now controls the Indian Government, appears to have embarked upon a campaign designed to achieve the final political, if not military, defeat of Pakistan on the question of Kashmir.

The development which may vitally affect the course of this campaign is a recent shift in the balance of internal Congress Party power from the liberal faction of Prime Minister Nehru to the rightist faction of party President Tandon. This began in September 1950.

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Since that time, the rightists have steadily gained ground at the expense of Nehru and more liberal party elements. Rightist activities have so alienated certain sections of the party as to bring about their formal resignation. This, in turn, has weakened Nehru's position and removed a considerable portion of his support. Aside from dictating to Nehru on matters of internal policy, the rightists have now begun to challenge him on questions of foreign affairs, heretofore his exclusive prerogative. Furthermore, they have displayed a willingness to accept Nehru's resignation from the party if he should object to dictation.

Having achieved control of the Congress Party, the rightists seem to have turned their attention to a quick and final solution of the Kashmir problem. Their goal is the official establishment of a Kashmir Constituent Assembly and a vote of allegiance to India. Their method is to speed the election of the Assembly, to make it impossible for Pakistan to intervene short of war, to develop a "defensive" propaganda campaign enabling India to justify whatever action is required in carrying out its plans, and to increase political and military pressure upon Pakistan to the point where Pakistan will either have to resort to war or admit defeat. If necessary, the Congress rightists appear ready to make the first military move in Kashmir.

The Indian campaign has various aspects. It has attempted to demonstrate that the election of a Kashmir National Assembly constitutes no threat to an eventual settlement of the Kashmir question. An Indian news release suggests that, even if India were in permanent possession of Kashmir, it could not cut off Pakistan's water supplies derived from the rivers of that State, a point of great concern to Pakistanis. A second aspect of the campaign has been the production of "evidence" of Pakistan's aggressive intentions, which have necessitated the adoption of appropriate "defensive" measures by India.

Another most dangerous development has been a series of goading actions possibly designed to provoke Pakistan into making the first military move. These actions have included large-scale troop movements, placing almost all of India's fighting forces on the borders of West and East Pakistan. A series of raids by Afghan tribesmen along the northwestern and west-central borders of West Pakistan in late July and early August may have been Indian-inspired.

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Correction to  
INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM  
on

The Threat of War between India and Pakistan

The following paragraph should be inserted at the top of page 5:

The Congress Party rightists have the support of militant, ultra-nationalistic Hindu groups such as the Hindu Mahasabha and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. Both of these groups are firmly committed to the principles of a Hindu India, Indian possession of Kashmir, firm dealings with Pakistan, and eventual reunion of Pakistan with India. For the first time since 1950, these groups are now getting their views before the public.

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The current Indian agitation is very similar to a campaign waged by India against Pakistan late in 1949. At that time India made a strenuous, deliberate attempt through economic warfare to destroy the Pakistani economic system and force devaluation of the Pakistani rupee. Hindu extremists and the Indian press in West Bengal added a communal touch to the struggle, which, by March 1950, had led India and Pakistan to the verge of war. The outbreak of actual fighting was narrowly averted only by the last-minute personal intervention of Prime Ministers Nehru and Liaquat Ali Khan.

In August 1951, however, the balance of power within the Congress Party and the attitude of its ruling faction appear to be such as to prelude intervention. Nehru, who undoubtedly was in favor of Indian actions to retain control of Kashmir, apparently no longer has the power within his party to hinder the development of a situation which might lead to war. He may even doubt his ability to stop such a war through an extra-party appeal to the Indian public in his capacity as Prime Minister. It therefore seems highly significant that, on 11 August, Nehru reportedly asked to be relieved of membership in the top policy-making committees of the Congress Party.

Coming at this time, his request looks much like an effort to dissociate himself from inner party circles and to relieve himself of future blame for decisions made, or about to be made, by the rightist Congress leadership. Such a request would be consistent with Nehru's probably sincere desire to maintain world peace even though he strongly wishes India to retain Kashmir.

Three other Indian Cabinet and Congress Party members, close associates of Nehru, have resigned or expressed their desire to do so. If the moderating effect of these men, two of whom are Moslems, is removed from Indian Government and Congress Party councils, there is little to prevent the rise of anti-Pakistani and communal feeling in India which could ultimately lead to war.

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